



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

PARK RANGERS RESCUE TWO PARTIES OF STRANDED CLIMBERS ON MIDDLE TETON

Three members of an outdoor club from Provo, Utah became stranded on Saturday afternoon, June 7th, while attempting to climb the Middle Teton in Grand Teton National Park. After receiving a cell phone call at 3:00 p.m. from one of the stranded parties, park rangers initiated a technical rescue to bring the young men safely back to the Lupine Meadows trailhead.

Two separate parties from the outdoor group were trying to beat each other to the summit of the Middle Teton when they got off route and became stranded on precipitous and icy cliffs. Jonathan Johnson and Paul Jordan, both 28 years old, ended up near the Ellingwood Couloir. Adam Dover, age 27, of the second party became exhausted and could not safely descend the Southwest Couloir where he and partner Steve Risenmay, age 26, were climbing. Risenmay left Dover, eventually locating park rangers who had begun a rescue of Johnson and Jordan. Unfortunately, Risenmay gave inaccurate details about Dover's physical condition and situation, causing rangers to redirect rescue efforts to reach Dover first.

The two rescues began Saturday afternoon and lasted well into Sunday, as rangers worked continually throughout the night. The lengthy time was necessary to set up difficult, consecutive belays over ice-covered rocks in darkness to lower the stranded climbers from the Ellingwood Couloir. Multiple lowerings over hard-packed snow were necessary to rescue Dover from the Southwest Couloir. Once Dover exited the couloir, he was unable to continue hiking past the Platforms area of Garnet Canyon. Consequently, rescue staff stayed with him overnight and monitored his medical condition while providing him with food, water, and shelter. Dover was assisted to the trailhead Sunday morning, while Johnson and Jordan continued to hike out on their own after being rescued from the Ellingwood Couloir.

Because the two parties failed to properly plan for their mountaineering trip, and did not know where they were on the mountain, they were not prepared for the terrain in which they wandered. Their predicament, coupled with erroneous information provided by Risenmay, prompted the need for a full-scale, highly technical procedure involving more than eight rangers in the two rescues. The decision to stage a race to the summit, combined with a lack of pre-planning, route knowledge and equipment, all contributed to actions that were totally inappropriate for the wildness of the Teton Range. Were it not for the highly advanced and technical mountain-rescue skills of dedicated park rangers, it is possible that the stranded climbers could have perished.

Superintendent Steve Martin praised the park rangers involved in the rescue for their dedication, their premier mountaineering skills, and their willingness to perform high-risk rescues. Martin also thanked Teton Interagency dispatchers and other support personnel for their assistance with this rescue.

Martin reminds climbers to be fully prepared and knowledgeable about planned routes before attempting highly technical climbs. Climbers should always be prepared with extra equipment and food in the event that an emergency forces them to spend more time in the backcountry than originally planned.

This marks the fourth major search and rescue operation in the park this year. www.nps.gov/grte

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